

## 6.4 Antonymy

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Antonyms



# Antonyms

Antonyms are words that have opposite meanings.



# Types of antonyms

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- 1. Contradictory terms



# Types of antonyms

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## □ 2. contrary terms

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huge/very big/**big**/quite big/medium-sized/quite small/**small**/tiny



# Types of antonyms

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## □ 3. relative terms

- Reciprocal social relationship; one of them cannot be used without suggesting the other.
  - husband; wife
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# Contradictory vs. Relative

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## **man/woman** vs. **husband/wife**

- If an adult is not a man, then the adult must be a woman. ( $\checkmark$ )
  - If an adult is not a husband, then the adult must be a wife. ( $\times$ )
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# Characteristics of antonyms

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- 1. Many words, having synonyms, do not find their antonyms
    - read, hit, house, book, power, magazine, etc.
  - Therefore, in a language, there are a great many more synonyms than antonyms.
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# Characteristics of antonyms

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- 2. A word which has more than one meaning can have more than one antonym.
    - fast (firm; secure): loose
    - fast (quick): slow
    - fast (pleasure-seeking; wild): sober
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# Characteristics of antonyms

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- 3. Some pairs of antonyms differ in semantic inclusion: e.g. one member is more specific than the other and the meaning of the specific is included in that of the general.
    - man/woman; tall/short; old/young
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# Characteristics of antonyms

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- 4. Contrary terms are gradable antonyms, differing in degree of intensity, so each has its own corresponding opposite.



# Characteristics of antonyms

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- 4. Some words may have two different types of antonyms at the same time.

- happy { unhappy
- { sad

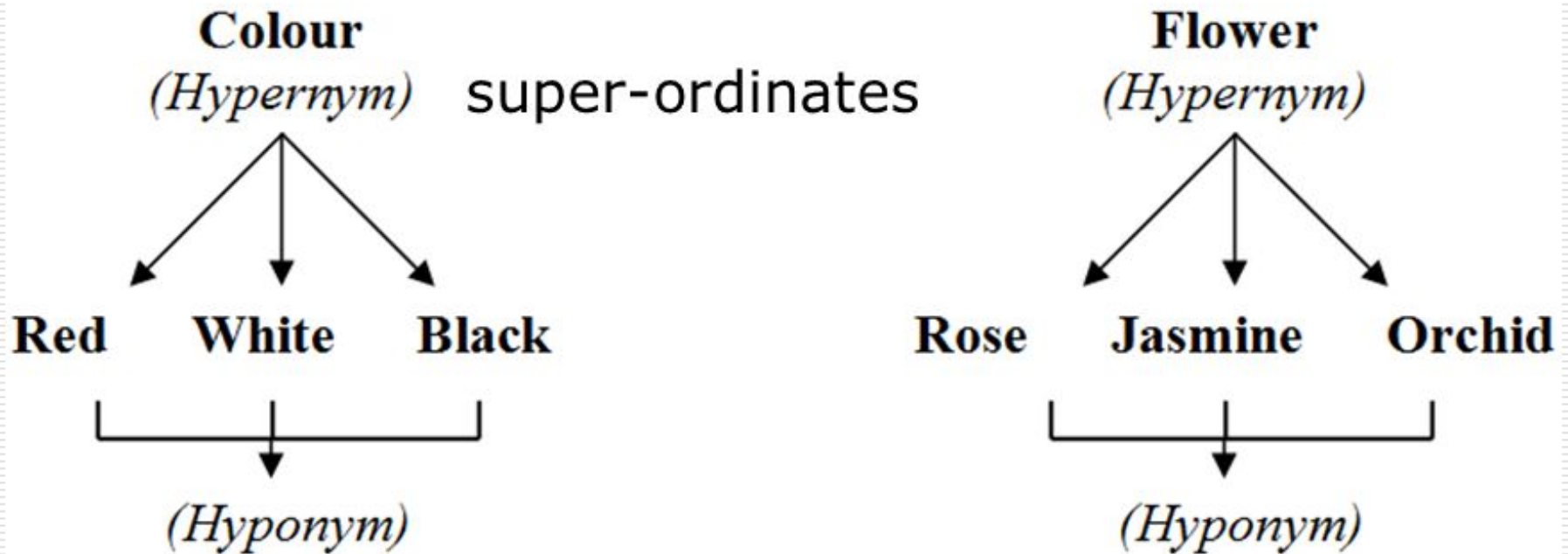
# The uses of antonyms

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- In reading, use antonyms to understand or interpret new/unfamiliar words;
  - In writing, use antonyms to make your writing more effective or vivid.
    - Idioms
    - proverbs or sayings
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# 6.5 Hyponymy

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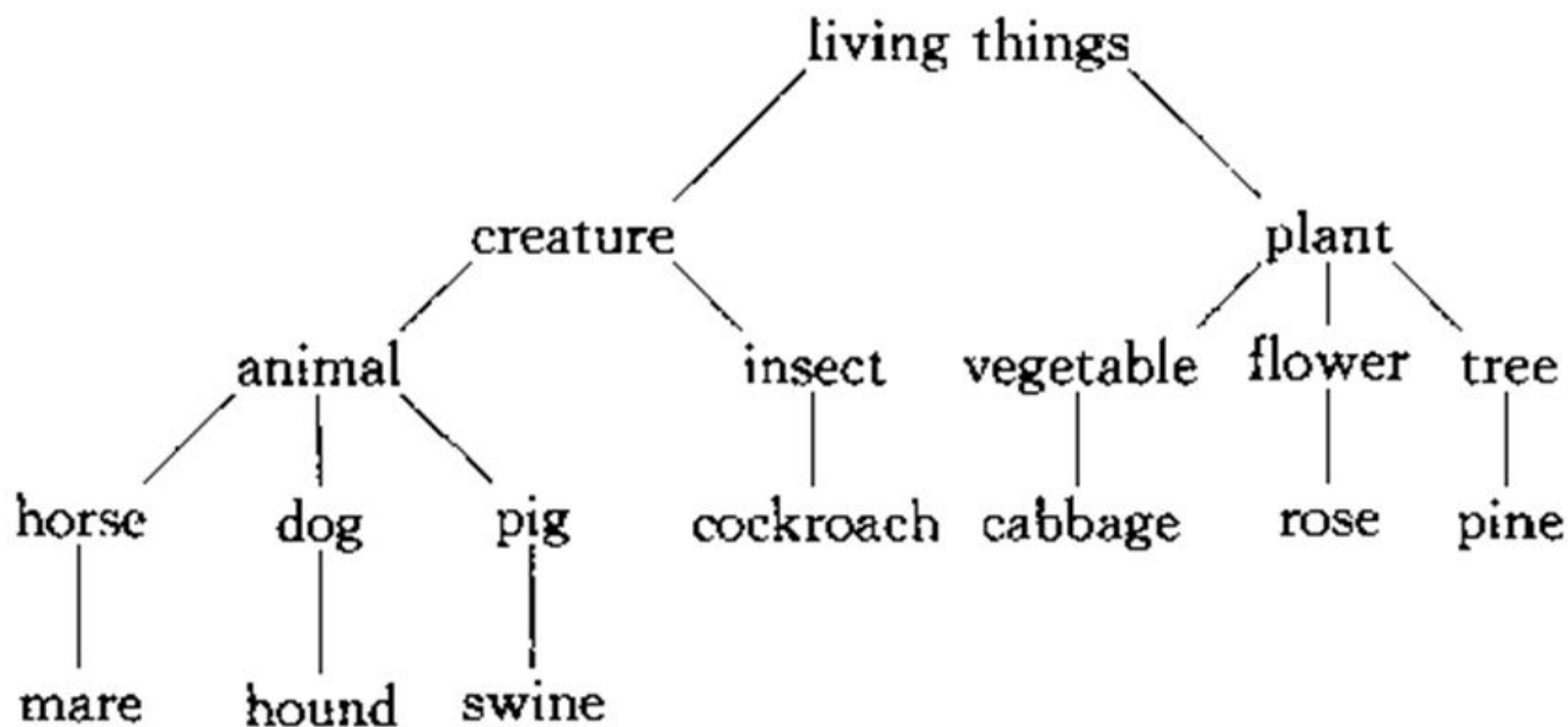


- hyper- : super
  - hypo- : under
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sub-ordinates

## 6.5 Hyponymy

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## 6.5 Hyponymy

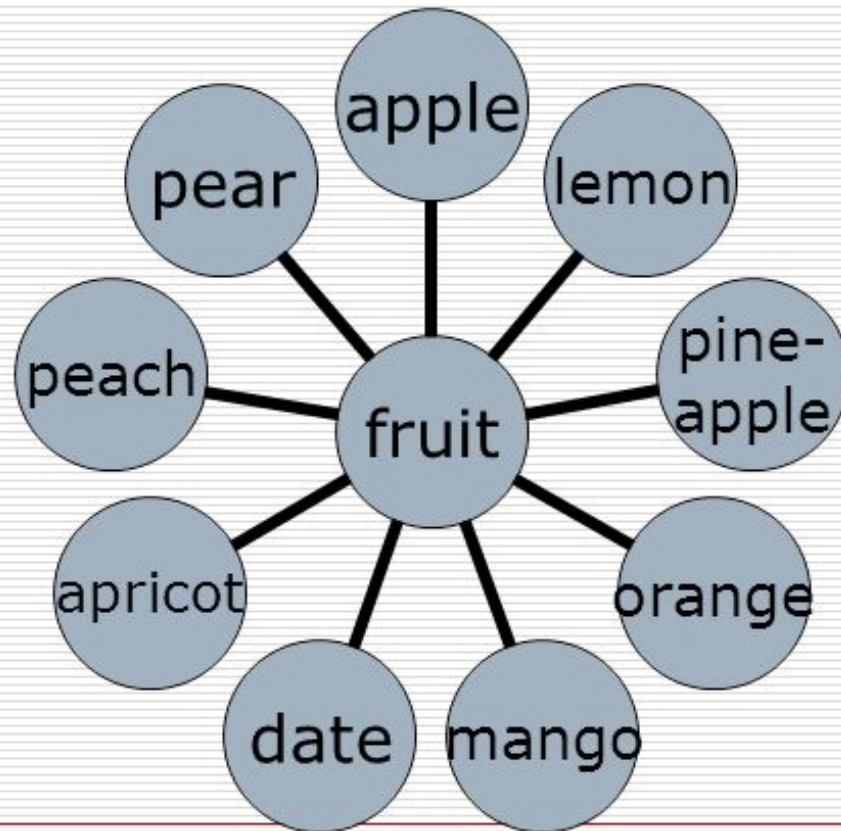
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1. IN receptive processing of language:  
reading
    - Hyponyms can give the writing coherence, and provide the key to understanding the text.
  2. IN productive processing of language:  
writing
    - Hyponyms can help achieve vividness, exactness and concreteness.
    - A good piece of writing needs superordinates and subordinates working mutually to achieve the desired effects.
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## 6.6 Semantic Field

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- German linguist *Trier*: field theory



## 6.6 Semantic Field

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- 1. The vocabulary of a language is in constant change

OLD

	female	male
unmarried	Miss	Mr
married	Mrs	
neutral		

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## 6.6 Semantic Field

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- 1. The vocabulary of a language is in constant change

### NEW

	female	male
unmarried	Miss	Mr
married	Mrs	
neutral	Ms	

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## 6.6 Semantic Field

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- 2. The semantic field of the same concept may not have the same members in different languages.
    - Kinship terms in Chinese (28) and English (7)
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THANK YOU

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